

Energy - A natural topic of discussion

With the presidential election just weeks away, a spokesman for a research, education, and public outreach campaign focused on getting the facts out about responsibly developing America's onshore energy resource base says voters can expect to hear a lot more about natural gas between now and November 3rd.

Natural gas was the number-one source for electricity generation last year, providing 38.4 percent of the nation's power. Use of natural gas has been increasing in recent years, due in part to Obama-era restrictions on coal -- not to mention utilities turning to natural gas because of the cheap and abundant supply as a result of widespread domestic use of hydraulic fracturing or "fracking."

President Trump supports fracking. So does Democratic Party presidential nominee Joe Biden, although critics have pointed to past comments from Biden saying he wanted to "ban fracking" as part of his energy and environment platform.

Will Allison, spokesman for Energy in Depth, an education and public affairs platform for the Independent Petroleum Association of America (IPAA), says it is definitely something for the candidates to consider.

"Natural gas is actually the number-one fuel that's helped the United States reduce emissions over the last 10 to 15 years," Allison tells OneNewsNow. "While renewables definitely have a role to play in reducing emissions, the transition to natural gas has really done a lot to reduce emissions in the United States, and the fracking boom is the reason the United States has become the global leader in reducing emissions."

The Sierra Club, which operates a Beyond Natural Gas Campaign and urges people to consider more "environmentally friendly" sources, such as wind and solar, is not a fan of natural gas. Still, critics of those platforms say materials for wind turbines and solar panels have to come from somewhere, meaning they too have an impact on the environment through the mining, manufacturing, and construction process.

Meanwhile, wind provided just 7.3 percent of the nation's electricity last year. Solar was responsible for 1.8 percent.

Joe Biden wants to pour more money into wind and solar, but many center-right economists say it is still not worth the money. Until then, natural gas will appear to be the go-to energy source in many parts of the country.